



Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 5/12/2003

GAIN Report #BU3009

## **Bulgaria**

### **Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety**

# **Bulgaria recongnizes END regionalization at a county level 2003**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

**Bulgaria is currently the only and the first OIE member-country which recognized U.S. counties in a regionalization of Exotic Newcastle Disease. As a result, local market stays open for U.S. poultry products.**

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Sofia [BU1], BU

Bulgaria Recognizes U.S. Counties in Regionalization of Exotic Newcastle Disease

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## **Bulgaria Recognizes U.S. Counties in Regionalization of Exotic Newcastle Disease**

The Bulgarian Veterinary Service announced a temporary ban on imports of poultry and poultry meat from twelve U.S. counties in four different States on April 17, based on outbreaks of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END). The ban is not expected to have an impact on U.S. poultry exports and is in fact an example of cooperative trade relations between the veterinary services of Bulgaria and the United States. According to APHIS, the ban is the first time that any country specifically recognized U.S. counties in a sanitary or phytosanitary trade (SPS) measure. Normally, countries recognize much larger geographic and political units when implementing SPS trade measures-- like states or provinces--which often interfere with agricultural exports.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) provided comprehensive and timely notifications on the status of the outbreak. Based on this information, the Bulgarian Veterinary Service undertook consultations with the AgOffice/Sofia and with the Regional APHIS office/Vienna. The key moment during these consultations was a discussion (with the AgOffice/Sofia) on APHIS risk assessments over a map of affected areas in the United States. Fortunately, Bulgaria's veterinary officials had visited many of these same U.S. counties while traveling in USDA sponsored programs. They were well informed about the activities of their APHIS/FSIS counterparts. These advantages, which were directly related to the previous USDA training programs, played the major role in the negotiation process.

After a series of intensive negotiations, a temporary ban on imports was issued on April 17, 2003. (Below is the a translation of the document).

"Ordinance # RD09-278 of April 17, 2003 (published in the Official Gazette #38, April 23, 2003)":

Based on article # 49 of the Veterinary Law and in connection with the New Castle Disease detected in the United States of America, I order:

1. To ban imports and transit with origin from the following states:

- State of California: counties Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside and Orange;
- State of Nevada: county Clark;
- State of Texas: counties El Paso and Hudspeth;
- State of New Mexico: counties Luna, Dona Anna and Otero;
- State of Arizona: county La Paz

of the following products:

- a) live birds (wild and domestic);
- b) hatching and commercial eggs;

c) raw materials and poultry products with the exemption of those undergone heat treatment/processing guarantying destruction of the END virus.

2. All imported poultry products in the period after April 10, 2003 until the publishing of the current Ordinance in the Official Gazette must be a subject to heat processing; live birds and hatching eggs must be subject to quarantine.

Chief Veterinary Officer is responsible for the control on the execution of this Ordinance."

## **Avian Influenza**

A similar approach was taken recently on the case with low pathogenic Avian Influenza (AI) in Connecticut. Despite being of low pathogenic type AI, local veterinarians were concerned about clinical signs and possible mutation of the virus into a high pathogenic type. Thanks to their regular professional dialogue with OIE's research committee, and after consultations with APHIS/Vienna, a temporary ban on Connecticut poultry exports was initiated. Reportedly, the scientific community and OIE's research committee are currently in process of reviewing the concept of requiring reporting on low path AI due to potential mutation of the disease. In fact, Bulgarian veterinary service actions mirrored current concerns and discussions in the OIE. This ban was canceled about a month and a half later on May 7, 2003 upon the receipt of an official APHIS letter describing all the measures taken by the U.S. veterinary authorities to stop and eradicate the disease.

## **Bulgaria's National Veterinary Service**

The National Veterinary Medical Service in Bulgaria has gone under a difficult period of restructuring and upgrading over the last 10 years. In close working cooperation with the AgOffice in Sofia, the Bulgarian vet service has continually built effective administrative and regulatory capacity. A number of training veterinary programs with USDA contributed to an establishment of a up-to-date professional service. These programs started back in 1996/97 and included ICD/TIRF, Cochran; and APHIS/FSIS-sponsored programs on the risk assessment, HACCP, trade issues, exchange of information, development of export certificates, disease prevention etc. A number of key veterinary officials, both government and private officers, including CVOs and Deputy CVOs, were trained in the United States. As a result, Bulgarian market has never been shut down for unjustified reason and stayed open for U.S. products, mainly poultry and meat.

